



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

February 2, 2004

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for February 2004

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for February 2004. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/.

Office of the State Superintendent

Welcome to OPI Deputy Superintendent "Bud" Williams

In January, State Superintendent Linda McCulloch appointed Dennis "Bud" Williams of Great Falls as the new OPI Deputy Superintendent. Most recently, Bud has served as an interim Superintendent for school districts in Kalispell ('02-'03) and Highwood ('00-'01). Williams began teaching in Power Public Schools in 1970 and became principal in 1974. From 1977-86 Williams was the Superintendent for the Highwood Public Schools. In the fall of 1986, Williams became the Superintendent for the Conrad Public Schools where he served until 1996. He also served as Assistant Superintendent of the Kalispell Public Schools for the 1998-99 school year.

Bud's 29 years of service to Montana schools is an invaluable asset to the state education agency. Bud is a recognized state leader for his work to ensure all Montana school children receive a high quality education. His long time advocacy for K-12 education at the Legislature has earned him the respect and thanks of parents and educators across Montana.

Bud Williams has been active on a wide variety of education organizations and committees. He has twice received the Montana School Board Association's "School and Community Service Award" (2003 & 1993). Williams served on the State Commission on Special Education Finance ('93-'94) and served two terms as Chairman of the North Central Montana School Administrators. He was Chairman of the Big Sky Special Education Cooperative and President of the North Central Special Education Cooperative. Williams has also been Chairman of the Montana Education Health Trust and served on the legislative and school finance committees of the School Administrators of Montana.

Williams was born in Great Falls and raised in Power, Montana. He graduated from Power High School in 1962. He received his Bachelors Degree in 1966 and a Masters Degree in 1968 from the University of Montana at Missoula. Bud Williams and his wife Eddie have raised three sons and have 4 grandchildren.

Please join State Superintendent Linda McCulloch and the OPI staff in welcoming Bud to OPI. Bud brings a lifetime of experience and service to the school children of Montana.

A Heartfelt Thanks to outgoing Deputy Superintendent Spencer Sartorius

State Superintendent Linda McCulloch extends her deepest appreciation to Spencer Sartorius, who has served as OPI's Deputy Superintendent for the past year. Sartorius, a 25-year veteran of the Office of Public Instruction, began serving as Deputy Superintendent following the retirement of former Deputy Superintendent Bill Cooper in December 2002. For the past year, Spencer has continued in his role as Assistant Superintendent of Education Services while performing the duties of Deputy Superintendent. This has been no easy task, but Spencer has performed these duties admirably and maintained a sense of humor through it all. Spencer has returned to his duties as Assistant Superintendent and continues to be a valuable member of the State Superintendent's management team. Thank you, Spence!

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for January 2004:

- ♣ Welcomed Dennis "Bud" Williams as OPI's new Deputy Superintendent
- ♣ Greeted students at Helena Middle School as they arrived for the school day
- ♣ Met with Young Ag Couples at their annual conference in Helena
- ♣ Finalized the AYP status of the "to be determined" schools
- ♣ Appeared on "Voice of the Veterans," a public access television show to talk about the OPI's honorary high school diploma program for veterans
- ♣ Welcomed Career and Technical Education Student Organization's leaders to their annual conference in Helena
- ♣ Attended the School Renewal Commission meeting
- ♣ Addressed the South Hills Education Coalition in Missoula
- ♣ Convened the monthly meeting of her OPI Cabinet
- ♣ Received an update on the Otter Creek Coal development project
- ♣ Attended the meetings of the Board of Regents, Board of Public Education, Board of Education, and the K-20 Leadership Group
- ♣ Visited with the Young Presidents of Businesses organization at their annual meeting
- ♣ Spoke at the Montana Library Media Specialists annual retreat
- ♣ Met with a School Board member from Belgrade
- ♣ Attended the monthly Land Board Meeting
- ♣ Read to young children at the Lewis & Clark Library's Snowy Day Program
- ♣ Testified in the District Court trial of the School Funding Lawsuit
- ♣ Attended the South Central MASS group meeting in Billings
- ♣ Attended the Governor's press conference on the distribution of monies to prevent teen suicide and to support OPI's Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI)
- ♣ Reviewed MEA-MFT's Paraprofessional Training Program
- ♣ Met by phone with the US Department of Education's regional representative

OPI Web Survey

The OPI website is an essential communication vehicle for providing education information to educators and the public. Superintendent Linda McCulloch is seeking information on how we can best meet your needs. Look for a short survey to be coming your way in February asking for your feedback. By simply investing five-minutes to answer survey questions, you will help us to learn how we can enhance the OPI website. The survey will be sent to you via Official Email and posted on the OPI web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/web/>. For more information, contact the Internet Services Bureau staff at 444-3563, Cheri Bergeron at 444-2082, or Jan Lombardi at 444-1641.

The Reading Well Expands to Kindergarten – “Be Well, Read Well”

The Office of Public Instruction has partnered with both the Immunization Program and Medicaid's PASSPORT to Health Program in the Department of Public Health and Human

Services to promote The Reading Well. The purpose of the program is to promote wellness and reading. Beginning this spring, kindergartners will receive a book when they are immunized for school entry and their record is updated in the vaccine registry. The "book incentive" project involves Tribal Health Services, County and Indian Public Health Departments and private providers who will coordinate service delivery with their local schools. It is expected that The Reading Well program will not only increase immunization rates for Montana children, but also facilitate literacy and encourage positive one-on-one time between parents and children as they read the book together. The Reading Well is supported by State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's READ Montana! Initiative. OPI Contacts: Jan Lombardi at 444-1641 or jlombardi@state.mt.us or Debbie Hunsaker at 444-0733 or dhunsaker@state.mt.us.

Free Books through the Literacy Empowerment Foundation

Bruce Larkin, the author of over two hundred children's books, has generously offered to donate to every kindergarten and first grade child in the United States a supply of his books to call their own. The Literacy Empowerment Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, will distribute books through the Books from Bruce Program. Free books are available to educators to give to their students at <http://www.literacyempowerment.org>. Educators only pay shipping and handling.

OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour

State Superintendent Linda McCulloch has mapped her Yellow School Bus Tour schedule for 2004. The Superintendent and several OPI staff will board the bus to visit schools in Helena, the Flathead and Northwest area, Anaconda, Great Falls, Southcentral Montana, and Missoula. The Yellow School Bus Tour is an informal way for OPI staff to listen and learn about the current situations and diverse needs of educators across Montana. Since its inception in Spring 2002, the Yellow School Bus Tour has taken a total of 42 OPI staff on the road logging more than 3700 miles and visiting 17 communities. If you would like more information, contact OPI Tour coordinator, Jan Lombardi at jlombardi@state.mt.us or 444-1641.

Montana K-12 Public School Renewal Commission

The next meeting of the School Renewal Commission will be February 23rd in Helena at the State Capitol. Information regarding membership, meetings and resources is available on the web: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/gov2/css/boards/renewal/default.asp>. Contact: Kris Goss, Education Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, at 406-444-3862 or kgoss@state.mt.us. OPI Contact: Madalyn Quinlan, mquinlan@state.mt.us or 406-444-3168.

January Board of Public Education Meeting

The OPI staff presented a variety of reports and several action items at the January Board of Public Education meeting. Reports included State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's, No Child Left Behind by Nancy Coopersmith, the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey by Rick Chiotti, the Annual Transportation Report by Maxine Mougeot, a report on the online teacher certification renewal process and emergency authorization for employment data by Margaret Bowles, and a Montana Advisory Council for Indian Education update and recommendations by Lori Falcon. Action items included a "white paper" on the procedures for licensure suspension and revocation and the report of a license surrender by Cathy Warhank, a report on advice and deficiency improvement plans, and the five-year renewal of alternative standard requests by Al McMilin and Karen Richem. Please contact the individuals above if you need information about any of these topics. Contacts: Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Dennis "Bud" Williams (406) 444-7325.

March Board of Public Education Meeting

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting March 11-12, 2004, in the Meeting Room of the Montana Higher Education Complex, 2500 Broadway, Helena, Montana. Tentative BPE agenda items from the OPI include the State Superintendent's Report, the Annual School Food Services Report, NCLB and Assessment updates, and Accreditation and Middle School recommendations. Contacts: Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Dennis "Bud" Williams (406) 444-7325.

NCLB Report Card Website Goes Public on February 2

On February 2, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch announced a new state "Report Card" website to provide information on how Montana schools and districts are meeting the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. NCLB requires all school districts and the Office of Public Instruction to provide a public "Report Card" on how Montana schools and districts are meeting the requirements of this new law. The new website provides the public with easy access to this information.

In her press release, Superintendent McCulloch cautioned that the NCLB 'Report Card' should not be considered a comprehensive report on the quality of education provided by any Montana school or district. It only reports on how schools are meeting the new federal requirements. The State Superintendent strongly recommends that interested citizens take the time to visit with their local school trustees and educators to gain a more complete understanding of the schools within their communities.

The NCLB "Report Card" has information on schools, districts and the state, including:

- ♣ Report Card Overview
- ♣ Adequate Yearly Progress Status Reports
- ♣ Reading and Math Assessment Scores
- ♣ Graduation, enrollment, and/or attendance rates
- ♣ Status of highly qualified teachers

The NCLB "Report Card" provides information on the number of "highly qualified teachers" teaching core academic courses for each school. Montana teachers meet the definition of "highly qualified teacher" if they are licensed and endorsed in the areas in which they teach by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. "Core academic subjects" are English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, history, civics and government, economics, geography, foreign languages, and arts. Using Montana's definition of "highly qualified teacher," 99% of the core academic courses taught in Montana schools are taught by highly qualified teachers. Schools serving Montana's lowest income students had the same percentage of highly qualified teachers as schools in our highest income areas.

This new state website meets the federal requirements for both the state and local school districts. Through use of one state website, we are able to save Montana's 439 local school districts the expense of developing individual websites for each district. Anyone can access the "Report Card" for his or her local school by logging on to www.opi.state.mt.us/ReportCard/.

Because not all parents and members of the public have access to the Internet, posting report cards on the Internet alone is not a sufficient means of disseminating district report cards. School districts must disseminate district and school report cards to:

1. All schools in the district;
2. All parents of students attending those schools; and
3. The community through some public means.

OPI Contacts: Donna O'Neill, 444-0793 or doneill@state.mt.us or Joe Lamson, 444-3160 or jlamson@state.mt.us.

Need to insert the Report Card charts into other documents? Once you have accessed the web-based Report Card, you can insert a Report Card chart into a word processor or page layout program. To insert a Report Card (SVG) chart into a word processor or page layout program:

- ♣ First, create the report you need.
- ♣ Right-Click on the graphic (Mac users, Click and Hold).
- ♣ A dialog box will pop-up, select the Copy SVG command.
- ♣ In the word processor, select the point where you want to insert the SVG graphic.
- ♣ Select the "Paste Special..." command. A dialog box will appear with several options.
- ♣ Select the "Device Independent Bitmap" option. Mac users, pick "Paste Picture" command. Click OK.

Device Independent Bitmaps consume large amounts of disk space and computer memory. Documents that contain multiple Device Independent Bitmaps may become quite large and slow your computers response time.

The color SVG charts have been designed to display and print in color while being printable with traditional Black and White Laser Printers

Note: OPI extends a special thank you to the school personnel who reviewed the NCLB Report Card as it was being developed. Your feedback helped OPI create a better product.

NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress: OPI Releases Final AYP Status of Schools for 2003-04

On January 21, 2004, State Superintendent Linda McCulloch released the 2003-04 final round of "Adequate Yearly Progress" Reports to comply with President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" Act. The updated "Adequate Yearly Progress" Report completes the final review of 209 Montana schools by the Office of Public Instruction.

Now that the third and final phase of the 2003-04 'Adequate Yearly Progress' Report for Montana schools and districts is complete, an additional 193 Montana schools and 123 school districts have met the federal standards required by the No Child Left Behind Act. In total, 80% of Montana schools (685 schools) met the requirements of the new federal law. 20% of Montana schools (173 schools) are identified as not making sufficient "adequate yearly progress" as required by the law. The latest AYP status changes complete the review process of Montana's 176 smallest schools and the further analysis and corrections of AYP status of 33 additional schools. As provided for by NCLB, schools and districts believing they have additional evidence that may affect the AYP determination will have 30 days after official notification to ask the OPI for a formal review of that AYP determination.

The current "Adequate Yearly Progress" status of all Montana schools and districts can be found on the Office of Public Instruction website at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Supt/NewsStories/03EB5306F9.nclk>. For a copy of the news release, go to <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Supt/NewsStories/041DB83870.nclk>. OPI Contact: Al McMilin, Accreditation Specialist, 444-3128, amcmilin@state.mt.us.

Questions concerning the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

If you have questions on how NCLB applies in Montana, don't hesitate to call the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Please refer to the [OPI Staff Directory](#) for contact information for each title program or visit the OPI Web site www.opi.state.mt.us. The OPI Web site contains

information on individual federal programs, contact information, frequently asked questions, as well as reference publications. There is also a federal programs section with numerous forms and publications. For information regarding Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), call Al McMillin, (406) 444-3128 and for questions on District or School Report Cards, call Donna O'Neill, (406) 444-0793.

NCLB Increases Data Collection Requirements for 2004-05: Disaggregated Enrollment and Attendance Data

The No Child Left Behind legislation requires significantly more data reporting from schools, districts, and the state to the federal government than at any time in the past. One of the new data requirements for 2004-2005 will be the collection of disaggregated enrollment and attendance data from schools and districts. Beginning in October 2004, the Office of Public Instruction will require schools to report *enrollment data by grade* for the following subgroups:

- ♣ Gender: Male and Female
- ♣ Racial/Ethnic Categories: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White
- ♣ Limited English Proficient students
- ♣ Economically Disadvantaged students: Free and Reduced Lunch eligible
- ♣ Students with Disabilities
- ♣ Migrant students

Schools will also be required to report attendance data for these same subgroups for the entire school population. Attendance data will not be collected by grade.

This new data collection will be tied to the MAEFAIRS enrollment data, but does not replace the MAEFAIRS enrollment collection. Users will report the disaggregated data on a separate data entry screen (for those filing electronically) or a separate paper form (for those filing on paper). In October 2004, the count date for disaggregated enrollment and attendance data will coincide with the MAEFAIRS enrollment count date. In the spring of 2005, the MAEFAIRS enrollment count date will continue to be February 1. The count date for disaggregated enrollment and attendance in the spring of 2005 will be the first day of the school's testing window for the MontCAS Phase II, the Measured Progress test.

The Office of Public Instruction plans to make sample formats of the disaggregated enrollment and attendance forms available to schools by April 2004. OPI Contact: Madalyn Quinlan, 444-3168, or mquinlan@state.mt.us.

Note: Disaggregated attendance data is also required when a school or district is eligible for "safe harbor" under NCLB. Until the new system is fully operational next fall, the OPI will continue to contact schools and districts individually when a safe harbor determination is necessary. The school or district will need to provide the disaggregated attendance data for the subgroup identified as a candidate for safe harbor.

NCLB Math/Science Partnership Competitive Grants Available

The No Child Left Behind legislation (ESEA Title II, Part B) authorized a Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MSP) competitive grant program. The purpose of this program is to improve the academic achievement of students in the areas of mathematics and science by encouraging state education agencies, institutions of higher education, and local education agencies to participate in programs that improve instruction and upgrade the status and stature of mathematics and science teaching. Partnerships must include, at a minimum, a high-need district and a department of mathematics, engineering, or science in an institution of higher

education. The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is responsible for the administration of this program.

On January 26, 2004, OPI held a Mathematics and Science Partnership Competitive Grant application teleconference for persons interested in the competitive grant program. The teleconference provided an overview of the grant program and detailed the specifics required for application. The application is posted on the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/TitleIPartB/MSPMTApp04.pdf>. The completed application is due to OPI by March 3, 2004. Grant awards will be announced on March 24, 2004. A slideshow describing the program and the application process is available at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/TitleIPartB/MSPMTPoint.pdf>. OPI Contact: Linda Vrooman Peterson, Division Administrator, Accreditation, (406) 444-5726, lvpeterson@state.mt.us.

Federal Guidance on School Improvement

The U.S. Department of Education has released new guidance on school improvement. This is especially pertinent for those schools and districts identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title I, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act. You may access the guidance by going to: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/news.html>. OPI Contact: B.J. Granbery, bgranbery@state.mt.us, 406-444-4420.

Education Licensure

Thank you to all those who completed the OPI survey regarding the Montana Jobs for Teachers web page. We have received lots of responses to help us improve the website. If you have not yet completed the survey, you may still do so by clicking on <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/regForms/JobsforTeachers/Index.html>. OPI Contact: Margaret Bowles, 444-2580 or mbowles@state.mt.us

Assessment

The January 2004 issue of JUMP, the OPI online assessment newsletter, is online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/assessment/newsletters/Jan2004AssessNews.pdf>. The January JUMP contains information on the following topics:

- ♣ Future of the NRT Survey
- ♣ Ethnicity coding
- ♣ Time requirements for statewide testing
- ♣ Test administration training schedule
- ♣ Test administration training site information
- ♣ Link to register for training
- ♣ Materials for training
- ♣ Link to materials for training
- ♣ Testing timelines

School Budgeting and Accounting

Spring Enrollment Count – Due to OPI by February 11

The Spring Enrollment count date is Monday, February 2, 2004. Most districts will submit their enrollment reports to OPI using the MAEFAIRS electronic reporting system. Paper filers have received their reports by mail. Enrollment and ANB information is posted at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/Enrollment.html>. In case February 2 is not a school

day (maybe it's a snow day?), report enrollment and attendance on the following school day. OPI Contact: Tal Redpath at (406) 444-3024 or tredpath@state.mt.us.

Preliminary Budget Data Sheets for FY 2004-05 will be emailed to districts on March 1. The Budget Data Sheets reflect direct state aid, ANB, special education block grant rates and disproportionate cost funding, and GTB subsidies. Note that OPI must receive all February 1 Spring Enrollment Reports for districts statewide before the March 1 data can be issued, due to impacts of ANB on the special education funding distribution formulas. OPI Contact: Bonnie Maze, (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.

2004 Elections Calendar

The calendar for the May 4, 2004 trustee and general fund election has been updated and is posted at the following website:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/2004ElectionCal.pdf>.

Need more information about elections? OPI Contact: Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Recently, controversy has emerged regarding whether voters in school elections must show identification before voting. OPI sent out an official email stating that attorneys from OPI, the Montana Secretary of State's office, and MtSBA agree that voters do not have to show ID to vote in school elections. The official e-mail can be viewed at

http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail/9B2EA34C-3B9ACA00-01532B8E?WasRead=1.

Other attorneys, however, disagree. In fact, several county attorneys are even advising their schools to require voters to show ID at school elections. Schools receiving conflicting instructions regarding this issue should obtain legal counsel. Please refer any questions you may have to Mike Waterman (444-4524, mwaterman@state.mt.us) or Cathy Warhank (444-4402, cwarhank@state.mt.us).

Coding for Medicaid Payments

Deposit Medicaid receipts in Fund 15 under a separate project reporter code. Code receipts for regular School Based Services (SBS) using revenue sources 3351-3355. This payment will be reimbursements for services such as physical therapy, speech therapy, etc. Code receipts for the new Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Services program (CSCT) using revenue source 3356. Code expenditures using expenditure program 100 regular education services or 280 special education services. School districts do not have to maintain effort on Medicaid funds. OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt, 444-1257, joberembt@state.mt.us.

Days and hours

Districts must provide a minimum number of hours of pupil instruction time and at least 180 days to qualify for full state funding. Hourly requirements are: 360 hours for Kindergarten (at least 90 days), 720 hours for grades 1-3 and 1080 hours for grades 4-12. There is a significant penalty for shortages in either days or hours of pupil instruction time. Trustees may want to schedule a few make-up dates in case days are needed to adjust for tournaments, snow days, etc. Release days for activities which are not school sponsored and for which attendance is not required do not count toward the minimum days and hours. OPI Contact: Tal Redpath at (406) 444-3024 or tredpath@state.mt.us.

FY 2004-05 Excel Spreadsheets for General Fund Budgeting

Excel spreadsheets are now posted on the School Finance website under School Budgeting:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/excel.html>. The spreadsheets are pre-filled with FY05 basic and per-student entitlements. You will need Excel 6.0 to open and use the spreadsheets. OPI Contact: Nica Carte at (406) 444-1960 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

SB 424 Retirement Costs for FY05

In budgeting for salaries and retirement costs for FY05, be aware that SB 424 allows districts to charge retirement costs to the retirement fund when the salary "and health-related benefits" are charged to non-federal funds or the school food program. That is, in order to pay retirement costs using the retirement fund for a staff person, both the person's *salary and any health-related benefits* (i.e., health insurance premiums) have to be paid from non-federal funds or school food program funds. For an employee paid from both federal and non-federal sources, the district should charge the health-related benefits to the federal and non-federal funds proportional to the salary. The retirement costs charged to the retirement fund and the federal grant must also be paid in that proportion. For example, if a teacher is paid 25% using Title I money and 75% using general fund, the employee's health insurance should also be charged 25%/75%. Retirement costs must be paid 25% from the Title I and 75% from the retirement fund. Note: Workers' Comp insurance premiums are not "health-related benefits" and may still be funded 100% from the general fund for all employees. OPI Contact: Joan Anderson, 444-1960, or janderson@state.mt.us.

Pupil Transportation

Approved Bus Routes: Please remind bus drivers that buses must be driven on routes as the county transportation committee approved them. Routes must not be altered without the county transportation committee's approval. Running alternative routes without approval may result in state and county overpayments that are subject to refund. Altering routes might also expose the district to unnecessary liability risks. OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

1st Semester Claims Due in February: In mid-January, OPI mailed each district clerk the 1st semester claims for transportation reimbursements. These forms are called the TR-5 and TR-6 forms. Claims are due from the school trustees to the County Superintendent by February 1 and to OPI by February 15. OPI pays 1st semester reimbursements in March. Claims received after the February 15 deadline will be paid with the second semester claims in June. OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot, 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us

MASBO School Budgeting Workshops

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will hold budget workshops during April, presented by school business managers and OPI staff. The workshops are full day sessions allowing clerks, superintendents, county superintendents to prepare a budget using real district data in a "hands-on" approach. Shorter sessions are also offered so trustees can get an overview. There is a charge for the sessions. Contact Lynda Brannon at MASBO for registration information: masbo@in-tch.com or (406) 442-5599.

Financial Accounting for State and Local School Systems: 2003 Edition

The National Center for Education Statistics recently released the NCES finance handbook, *Financial Accounting for State and Local School Systems: 2003 Edition* (NCES 2004-318). It is available on the web at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004318>. This handbook has been designed as a national standard for the state departments of education to use in reporting financial data and for school districts to use in preparing comprehensive annual financial reports. The 2003 Edition contains guidance on conforming to Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements, up to Statement 39. There are chapters on

budgeting, governmental accounting and financial reporting. Account codes have been updated to reflect changes in the new reporting requirements and developments in technology and security. There are also special chapters on accounting for student activity funds and a model for school level program cost accounting. Contact: Frank Johnson, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Phone: 202-502-7362, E-mail: frank.johnson@ed.gov

U.S. Dept. of Education to Hold Hearing on Retirement Fund Restrictions

The U.S. Dept. of Education's Impact Aid Program will hold a hearing in Room 317 of the State Capitol on March 23, 2004. The hearing begins at 1:30 p.m. in Helena, and is the result of a request made by the Montana Indian Impact Aid Schools Association for the Department to determine whether MCA Section 20-9-501 as amended by SB 424 (2003 Session) violates Section 8009(a) of Impact Aid law. Section 8009 prohibits states from considering (i.e., reducing) state aid to districts on the basis of their receipt of Impact Aid. SB 424 placed restrictions on districts' use of the Retirement Fund for retirement benefits of federally salaried district employees. The Department will determine if the Retirement Fund restriction, and any resulting reduction in state aid (state guaranteed tax base aid paid in support of the county retirement levy), violates Section 8009.

The U.S. Dept. of Education will send formal notification of the hearing to all Montana school districts. Districts may provide comment at the hearing. For districts unable to attend the hearing, it is anticipated that the Department's notification will contain instructions for submitting written comment. OPI is planning to make the hearing available to districts via video streaming. U.S. Dept. of Ed Contact: Catherine Schagh, Impact Aid Program Director, at 202-260-3858 or Catherine.Schagh@ed.gov. OPI Contact: Tal Redpath, 406-444-3024 or tredpath@state.mt.us.

Information Services Division

OPI Efforts to Improve Annual Data Collection Performance

Beginning October 8th and continuing through October 24, 2003, users of the Annual Data Collection (ADC) experienced very slow response of the OPI network especially during peak hours of usage. For the ADC users and the OPI staff supporting ADC, the slow response was frustrating. OPI technical staff responded by a concerted effort to identify and fix the causes of the slowness. OPI also extended the deadlines for completing the ADC to October 31st.

The root cause of the slowness was how some queries in the ADC program accessed the OPI database. In response, OPI staff have identified the problem areas, are getting trained in how to avoid these problems in the future, have tools in place to stress test the ADC program prior to release, and are rewriting the slow sections of the program. The OPI IT staff is certain the ADC program will perform up to the expectations of users in the future. OPI Contact: Bill Hallinan, 444-1962, bhallinan@state.mt.us.

February I Love to Read Month

Please join us in celebrating February as "I Love to Read Month," February 14 as "I Love to Read Day," and Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2, 2004. In Montana, the month of February is dedicated toward fostering a love of reading for information and enjoyment. A calendar of daily activities and a page of suggested ideas are provided on the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/AmReads/index.html> to help you celebrate and promote the joy of reading.

Please share some of the ways in which you celebrate reading. Your comments on the "I Love to Read" activities will be appreciated. Send your ideas and comments to June Atkins, jatkins@state.mt.us, fax to (406) 444-1373 or mail to June Atkins, Office of Public Instruction, PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2051

Career, Technical and Adult Education Division

2003-04 Career and Technical Education Enrollment Reports are due February 10, 2004. Please make sure that each of your career and technical education instructors completes either the paper or the electronic version and submits it by the due date. The electronic enrollment report is available at www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/SER/.

Four out of the five factors used to determine state Career and Technical Education payments in the fall come from the CTE enrollment reports. If your district fails to submit reports or completes them incorrectly, your FY05 allocation will be affected. The CTE enrollment reports are also used for determining yearly Carl Perkins accountability levels. OPI contact: Karla Beagles (406) 444-9019 or kbeagles@state.mt.us.

Special Education

Special Education Child Count Data Reporting

The special education Child Count data collection process is complete for another year. In this, the third year for electronic submittal, 93 percent of the data was collected electronically over the Internet. Only four special education cooperatives and nine school systems did not take advantage of electronic submittal. A new feature this year allowed school districts that maintain special education data in a database application to import their data directly into the Child Count application. Two special education cooperatives and seven school systems made use of this option. The next special education data collection requirement is for Exiting Data (data on students who have exited the special education program), and will begin around the first of May 2004. Electronic submittal of Exiting data is recommended. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns about the Child Count data collection process, please contact Pat Reichert at 444-4430, e-mail to preichert@state.mt.us.

Educational Opportunity and Equity

2004 Title I Conference

Superintendent Linda McCulloch will welcome educators to the 2004 Title I Conference at the Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls on February 24, 2004. The conference will run until 3:00 pm on February 25. Online registration and an agenda are available at www.opi.state.mt.us/TitleI/. Breakout sessions during the two days will feature successful programs and practices from Montana schools and other programs across the US. Lynore Carnuccio from the Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington DC, will be the luncheon speaker on Tuesday and Natalie Jansorn, Center for Partnerships in Schools, Johns Hopkins University, will be the luncheon speaker on Wednesday.

A High Priority Schools Institute will be held on February 23, for invited schools that have been identified for Title I Program Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring. The Institute will continue to focus on teaching and learning in mathematics with assistance from staff of the Center for Teaching and Learning in Mathematics, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, OR. OPI Contact: Gwen Smith, Title I Programs, gsmith@state.mt.us, 406-444-5660.

Montana GEAR UP has issued a Request for Proposals for the 2004 Summer Program

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) works with schools in low-income areas in Montana to provide support for teachers and schools as well as different learning opportunities for students. The focus of the 2004 Summer Program is to offer high school students from GEAR UP schools a true taste of what college life will be like, and how they can better prepare themselves to be successful upon entering post secondary institutions. For more information about the GEAR UP Summer Program, or to download the RFP, visit the GEAR UP website at <http://gearup.montana.edu/> or contact Peter Butler at 406-444-0848 or pbutler@ocche.montana.edu.

Indian Education for All

The *Indian Education for All* Tribal College Symposium was held January 28 - 30 at the Salish Kootenai College. Representatives from five of the seven colleges, Indian educators from across the state, OPI staff and OCHE staff attended the symposium and listened as the college faculty and presidents presented information regarding their efforts toward Indian Education for All. The symposium was a good opportunity and an important step to find ways to strengthen partnerships between the tribal colleges, school districts, and the state. The MACIE sub-committee for Indian Education and Professional Development held an evening meeting in conjunction with the symposium and gave a report to participants. OPI Contact: Lori Falcon, Indian Education specialist, 444-3013, lfalcon@state.mt.us.

Montana Indian Education Association Conference

The Board of Directors of the Montana Indian Education Association will hold its 23rd Annual MIEA Spring Conference on April 1-4, 2004, at the Holiday Inn Parkside in Missoula. The Montana Office of Public Instruction has received a Department of Education Dropout Prevention Grant. As a part of this grant, OPI will host speakers and a "dropout prevention strand" of workshops throughout the conference. The MIEA Conference will be a great opportunity to learn, share successes, and network with others who are working to define the educational future of American Indian people. Registration information is available at http://www.mtiea.org/conference_2004/forms.html. Contact: Patty LaPlant, MIEA Executive Secretary and Conference Coordinator, 406-728-5615 or via e-mail apaki@mtwi.net.

Using PSAT/NMSQT Scores to Determine Advanced Placement Potential

"AP Potential" can help you find additional students for existing AP courses at your school; further, if you are considering adding a new AP course to your school's offerings, you can generate a roster of potential students for that course to help you reach out to students that might be encouraged to register for that course. Potential students are identified based on their PSAT/NMSQT score (i.e., math, verbal, or combined score depending on the subject area) and the correlation of these scores to AP Exam results. AP Potential has been designed to assist schools by providing rosters that help counselors, administrators, and teachers make sure that no student who has a likelihood of succeeding in AP is overlooked.

AP Potential should be used in conjunction with the College Board's policy on AP student selection: "All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be considered for admission to AP courses. The Board encourages the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP courses for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population." The link to the College Board's new program, AP Potential is <http://appotential.collegeboard.com/appHome.do> OPI Contact: Kathleen Mollohan, 444-4317, kathym@state.mt.us.

Graduating high school seniors eligible for National Youth Science Camp®

Graduating high school seniors planning a career in science, mathematics, engineering or medicine, and who participate at the regional and/or state science fairs, are eligible to apply for the all expense paid, month-long National Youth Science Camp® in West Virginia from June 24-July 19, 2004. Four students from each regional fair and the state fair will be nominated. From these, a team of judges will select two delegates to the camp. Winners will meet with some of today's nationally renowned scientists and be exposed to ideas, lectures and hands-on studies. Other opportunities include backpacking, rock climbing, caving, kayaking, mountain biking, science field experiences and a three-day trip to Washington, D.C. For more information, eligibility requirements and application, visit NYSC's website: <http://www.sciencecamp.org>, Montana Science Fair website: <http://www.mtsciencefair.org>, or contact Linda DeMinck at 406-243-2866

2004-05 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program is funded from the Title IV, Part A, Subpart 6, Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, Higher Education Amendments of 1992. Approximately 23 scholarships are awarded each year to outstanding Montana high school seniors and graduates of GED programs. Each scholarship is \$1,500 annually and may be renewed three times during undergraduate study, if the students maintain eligibility. The purpose of the scholarship is "to promote student excellence and achievement and to recognize exceptionally able students who show promise of continued excellence." Scholarships will be equitably distributed across geographic regions of the state. Applications will be read and rated by a team of reviewers.

An applicant must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- ♣ Be a graduating high school senior or a graduating GED student for the 2003-04 school year;
- ♣ Have a 3.60 or higher GPA in a college preparatory curriculum and have a cumulative score of 1380 on the SAT, or 30 on the ACT;
- ♣ Use the scholarship award for the first year of study, renewable for up to three additional years, as a full-time student at any public or private institution of higher education, as defined by 34 CFR-668.2. Proprietary institutions are not included and neither are nonprofit institutions that only provide training programs of less than one year; and
- ♣ Be a resident of Montana and a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident of the United States.

The 2004-05 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program Application can be found at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Scholarships/index.html>. The completed applications must be postmarked by March 1, 2004. OPI Contact: Carol Gneckow, (406) 444-2417 or e-mail, cgneckow@state.mt.us.

Health Enhancement and Safety Division

Coordinated School Health Unit

Mercury in Schools

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is asking the OPI to make schools aware of contact persons should schools wish to consult with federal Environmental Protection Agency specialists regarding exposure to mercury in school settings. According to the DEQ, there have been no Montana reports of child illness due to exposure to mercury in the school setting. However, to keep school officials abreast of the concerns related to exposure to

mercury, the DEQ wants schools know that short-term or long-term exposure to metallic mercury can lead to serious health problems. Human exposure to metallic mercury in schools occurs from breathing contaminated air. Metallic mercury from chemistry and science laboratories can be spilled and evaporated into breathing space in schools exposing children and teenagers. Should schools have questions regarding exposure, evacuation, emergency response, and associated clean up, please call the EPA at 303-312-6284. At that number, you can also ask for a description of EPA's mercury in school programs, state contacts, EPA contacts and helpful websites.

Contact: Matthew M. Langenfeld, Chemical Initiative Coordinator, EPA Region 8 (Ph: 303-312-6284). Locally Tom Ellerhoff, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, 406-444-5263, tellerhoff@state.mt.us or Brian Spangler, 406-444-5307, bspangler@state.mt.us both provide consultation and technical guidance for cleanup and disposal of chemicals including mercury.

Lewis and Clark Fitness Challenge Toolkit

Through the support of the Montana Team Nutrition Program and the Eat Right Montana Coalition, the Lewis and Clark Fitness Challenge Toolkit has been developed and is available free from the Office of Public Instruction. This kit will help add a health component and fun to your Lewis and Clark unit. Help motivate students to stay active by helping them walk across Montana through regular physical activity. Nutrition and fitness lessons are geared to fourth and fifth grade level students. The kit can be downloaded (in PDF file format) from <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/L&CFitness.html>. Students can track their daily activity and can walk across Montana just like Lewis and Clark did on the famous Expedition. The kit contains the tracking forms, press releases, fitness and nutrition lessons to incorporate into the Lewis and Clark curriculum and nutrition handouts for parents. For more information, contact Amy Guza at Montana Team Nutrition Program 994-5641, # 2 or eguza@montanadsl.net or Katie Bark at 994-5641 # 1, or kbark@state.mt.us.

There Will Never Be A Better Time- Apply For CHIP Today

Montana's Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) received a boost from Gov. Judy Martz at the end of October in the form of \$609,900. With these new funds and matching funds from the federal government, CHIP was able to enroll all the children on the waiting list. The funds also helped pay the cost of a higher premium the Department of Public Health and Human Services pays to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana each month.

New research done by the University of Montana tells us there are about 22,000 uninsured children who could be eligible for CHIP. The Department is planning to begin raising funds to help purchase insurance for those children. If you know of organizations or individuals in your area that might be able to help, call or email the CHIP office.

CHIP no longer has a waiting list so this is a great time to encourage families to apply for CHIP coverage. The CHIP Health Line number is: 1-877-543-7669 (toll free), or Email chip@state.mt.us or visit the Web Site at www.chip.state.mt.us.

School Health Profiles (SHP) – coming March 1

The Profiles is conducted biennially to assess characteristics of and trends in health education and health policies among middle/junior high schools and senior high schools. The Profiles questionnaire includes assessment of physical education and physical activity programs, nutrition education topics, nutrition-related policies, health education courses and asthma management activities. The Profiles will be sent to school principals and the lead health

educator on March 1, 2004. The questionnaire only takes 10-15 minutes to complete. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us

HIV/AIDS/STD Program

HIV/AIDS Training for Educators of Native American students

The OPI is hosting a two-day training for educators of Native American students designed to provide HIV/AIDS/STD prevention education material for students in grades 7-12. The training will include teaching strategies that address decision-making skills, making wise and informed decisions, risk of transmission, prevention methods, and reasons for abstinence. Registration deadline is February 6, 2004. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us

HIV/AIDS/STD Summer Workshop for Teachers

The annual HIV/AIDS/STD Summer Workshop for teachers will be held in Helena on June 16, 17, and 18 at the Wingate Inn. Health enhancement, family and consumer science teachers, counselors and any teacher interested in providing age-appropriate HIV/AIDS/STD educational material to students are encouraged to attend the FREE training. The three-day training will feature material from curricula that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found to provide characteristics of effectiveness in reducing infection from STD and HIV and unintended pregnancy. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us

School Nutrition Unit

Creating a Healthy School Environment Grants

The *Creating a Healthy School Environment Grant* is the result of a collaboration of the Montana Team Nutrition Program and Eat Right Montana Coalition. There is a total of \$5000 in mini-grant dollars available to support schools that want to improve the health of students by creating a healthier environment. Mini-grants of up to \$300 each will be awarded to schools that take positive, sustainable action steps to improve the environment in their school. Applications are due February 20, 2004. Grants will be awarded as early as March 12, 2004, and the funds must be used by December 31, 2004. Grant applications and information are available on the School Nutrition Programs website or by calling the Team Nutrition Program:

Team Nutrition Program
Montana State University
Attn: Debi Miller
(406) 994-5641 ext. 4
demiller@state.mt.us

OPI School Nutrition Programs
(406) 444- 2501
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html>

Student-Driven School Food Service Public Relations Grants

The Montana Team Nutrition Program is sponsoring mini-grants for student organizations (or classes) to work with school food service to develop and implement a public relations campaign for a school nutrition program. This grant has two purposes: to encourage student participation in the school nutrition programs and educate students about the foodservice industry. Mini-grants of up to \$1000 each will be awarded to schools, with a total of \$4,000 in grant money available. Applications are due February 27, 2004. Grant applications and information are available on the School Nutrition Programs website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html> or by calling the Team Nutrition Program, Montana State University Attn: Katie Bark (406) 994-5641 ext. 1, kbark@state.mt.us

National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) is March 8-12, 2004

NSBW is an excellent opportunity for schools participating in the School Breakfast Program to promote breakfast to students. It is also a wonderful time to start a new School Breakfast

Program. The theme for this year's NSBW is "*Navigate your day with school breakfast.*" School Nutrition Programs will have materials available for schools to use in promoting breakfast to their students, and provide assistance to schools that would like to start a new program. Now is the time to start planning for this week in your school. For more information, go to the American School Food Service Association's website at <http://www.asfsa.org/meetingsandevents/nsbw/> or contact OPI School Nutrition Programs at (406) 444-2501.

Best Practice Awards deadline March 15, 2004

The deadline to submit nominations for the Best Practice Awards to School Nutrition Programs is March 15. The four categories include: Reaching Needy Children in the Summer, Increasing School Breakfast Program Access, Increasing Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables by Participants, and the Healthy School Nutrition Environment. The nomination form is posted on the School Nutrition Programs website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html>. For more information: OPI School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Summer Food Service Program Application Deadline May 7, 2004

Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does the need for good nutrition. Children who are well fed learn better, behave better and feel better. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps children get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow throughout the summer months when they are out of school. Two types of programs are available, the area-wide program and the enrolled program. An area-wide program requires that at least 50 percent of the children living within the area served be eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program income eligibility guidelines. In an enrolled site, 50 percent or more of the children enrolled in a program must qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

If you sponsored the program last year, we extend our appreciation along with the hope you will continue and perhaps expand to additional sites or extend the duration of the program. If you are not a current sponsor, we urge you to give serious consideration to becoming one and to operate as many sites as you can, including non-school sites that may not be able to sponsor the program themselves.

We are committed to ensuring that the Summer Food Service Program is available to those children who are most in need and who benefit greatly from increased nutrition during the summer. Application packets will be sent out April 23. Previous year sponsor applications are due May 7, 2004. New sponsor applications are due May 28, 2003. OPI Contact: Sofia Janik, OPI School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444- 2521, sjanik@state.mt.us

Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education Unit

Traffic Education Master Teacher Recognition

No applications to recognize Traffic Education Master Teachers were received. This was the first year this opportunity has been available for Montana. There are a number of Montana traffic education teacher who qualify for this honor, and it is hoped that next year applications will be received. For more information contact David Huff, (406) 444-4396 or dhuff@state.mt.us.

Crossing Guards and Traffic Controls for School Areas

Links from the Montana Pupil Transportation and the Driver Education/Traffic Education web pages have been made to Chapter Seven, Controls for School Areas of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). This document provided model language for highway and traffic regulations. This document has not yet been adopted by Montana, however, among

other things, it provides guidance for schools on crossing guard qualifications, uniforms, signs, and operating procedures. Guidance is also provided for student safety patrols, however the 2003 Legislature removed language authorizing student safety patrols feeling it was no longer appropriate to encourage student crossing supervision in today's more complex traffic mixes. For more information link from either www.opi.state.mt.us/pupiltransport or www.opi.state.mt.us/drivered, or contact Pierre Jomini at the Montana Department of Transportation Safety Management Unit (406) 444-6113 or pjomini@state.mt.us.

Spring Traffic Education Conference

The annual Montana Traffic Education Association/Office of Public Instruction Traffic Education conference will be held at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls April 25-27, 2004. Rooms are \$55.00 per night. Registration is \$135. Nationally acclaimed expert and founder of the National Institute on Driver Behavior will offer a pre-conference class (April 23 & 24) on Using Model Roadway Simulations in the classroom. One semester credit is available from MSUN for this pre-conference. For additional information contact Jim Carroll, MTEA Executive Secretary at (406) 278-3285 or tjcarrol@rocketmail.com.

Governor's Student Exchange Program for Kumamoto, Japan

Soon, Montana high school principals and counselors will receive information from Governor Martz about the upcoming Governor's Student Exchange Program. The application deadline for students interested in going to Kumamoto as part of the Governor's Student Exchange Program is just around the corner – March 5th. Participation in this two-week summer experience provides our students with an unprecedented opportunity to learn first hand more about Japanese family life, culture, and education while living with a Japanese host family. This year marks the 22nd year of our sister-state relationship. This would be a good time to talk with your students about this program. For more information, please contact Rebecca Baumann, Trade Specialist at the Montana Department of Commerce. E-mail at rbaumann@state.mt.us or contact by phone at 841-2756.

Kumamoto Plaza in Helena is looking for host families! Would your family be interested in hosting a Japanese student this summer for one week? If so, or if you know someone who would be interested, please contact Tom Stearns, the Kumamoto Western Coordinator. E-mail at kpmont11@mt.net or contact by phone at 449-7904.

Lewis and Clark Funding Opportunity

The Western States Arts Federation announces the National Endowment for the Arts and Forest Service FY 2004 Arts and Rural Community Assistance Initiative. Applications are now being accepted online: <http://www.arcai.cgweb.org/>. Application Deadline: March 1, 2004. Questions or comments: Shannon E. Daut, WESTAF Director of Programs, 303-629-1166 (ph) <http://www.westaf.org>

Cultivating Curiosity: Growing Science Enrichment

Hands On Science Outreach (HOSO) announces a call for nominations for participants in "Cultivating Curiosity: Growing Science Enrichment." Those selected to take part will represent the next generation of leaders in HOSO's informal science enrichment programs for children from Pre-K through sixth grade. Participants will attend a four-day training opportunity in Waterloo, Iowa, and return to their communities equipped with all the tools needed to make research-based, science inquiry activities available to local elementary-aged children in small

group settings. Partial funding for "Cultivating Curiosity" is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. **The deadline to submit nominations is Feb. 16, 2004.** Complete application materials will be sent to those nominated. If you have any questions, please contact Gloria Lane by e-mail at glane@hosoprograms.org or call toll-free (877) 384-8053. You can also visit us online at www.hosoprograms.org

Where the Grants Are

The federal government recently unveiled a comprehensive Web site with information on all federal grant programs, making the application process vastly simpler for state and local governments. The site, developed in conjunction with state and local officials, has details on more than 800 grant programs from 26 federal agencies. Features include a search feature to "Find Grant Opportunities" and downloadable applications in the "Apply for Grants" section. The site is located at www.grants.gov.